THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. CHINTA MOHAN) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The fertilizers are imported to bridge the gap between the assessed demand and the indigenous availability. The precise quantity of fertilizers to be imported during the year 1991-92 has not yet been firmed up fully.

(c) and (d) The capacity utilization of the fertilizer plants in the country during 1990-91 has been 85.7 per cent in the case of nitrogen and 74.5 per cent in case of phosphate. Some of the plants could not achieve their full production capacity due to variety of factors including equipment break-down, interruption in power supply, unhappy industrial relations and less import of raw materials and intermediates.

[*Translation*]

IRREGULARITIES IN PURCHASE OF RICE

274. SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received complaints about the irregularities committed by the officers of Food Corporation of India in the purchase of rice in Bareilly division of Uttar Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the details of the action taken/proposed to be taken thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI TARUN GOGOI) : (a) Food Corporation of India has reported that a pseudonymous telegraphic complaint was received by them on 28-4-91 about the alleged acceptance of rice having broken grains ranging from 30 to 40 per cent at Bareilly and Shahjahanpur centres of Bareilly District of Food Corporation of India. However, even before receipt of the above, squads of the FCI Hqrs., on routine surprise checks during the January and February, 1991, found levy rice stock procured in Bareilly Distt. of FCI not conforming to the laid down uniform specifications in respect of moisture content, broken and dehusked grains.

(b) The District Manager, FCI, Bareilly, has been suspended, charge-sheeted and disciplinary proceedings against him are in progress.

PESTICIDE MENACE

276. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a serious concern about pesticides menace the world over; if so, the steps proposed towards finding effective and alternative technologies for agriculture and health sectors;

(b) whether many pesticides are implicated in causation of cancer and other health problems as brought out by various studies at Indian Toxicology Research Centre, Lucknow for the past two decades; and

(c) the names of Institutes/Units engaged in finding alternatives to pesticides in Agriculture and Health sectors and their yearly budget ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. CHINTA MOHAN) : (a) Yes Sir; harmful pesticides are banned and replaced by newer and safer ones from time to time. Towards this end, new technologies are developed indigenously and also through foreign collaboration.

(b) and (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

NEWS ITEM CAPTIONED "RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL IN IMPORTED PHOSPHATIC FERTILISERS"

277. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem

captioned "Radioactive material in imported phosphatic fertilisers" appearing in the 'Observer' dated 5 June, 1991;

(b) whether this report is based on a FAO document; and

(c) if so, when this was released and when this was received by the Government through its representative at FAO, Rome indicating action taken/proposed ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA) :

(a) There is no radioactive cadmium in phosphatic fertilisers as mentioned in the newspaper report. It is well known that all rock phosphates contain traces of uranium. However, they do not pose any health hazards during use.

(b) and (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

RESTRUCTURING/REVAMPING OF FERTILIZER CORPORATION OF INDIA

278. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have taken any decision regarding financial restructuring and revamping of the Fertilizer Corporation of India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of financial implications, particularly the write-off of accumulated losses; and

(d) the number of employees likely to be retrenched as a result thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. CHINTA MOHAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Question does not arise.

LIBERAL LICENSING IN PETRO-CHEMICAL SECTOR

279. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether his Ministry have examined the report recently submitted to the Planning Commission according to which liberal licensing is threatening to build up excess capacity in the petro-chemicals sector and likely to lead to wastage of scarce investment in the sector;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) the names of petro-chemical projects already sanctioned including Seelampur aromatics their location, capacity, the business houses involved and the progress made therein;

(d) whether the Government are reconsidering their decision about the implementation of the projects which had already been considerably delayed; and

(e) if so, the facts thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. CHINTA MOHAN) : (a) and (b) Report on "Perspective Planning of the Petrochemical Industry in India" has just been received from the Planning Commission.

(c) A statement is attached.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Question does not arise.